

PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM



POL MOVEMENT NORTH VIETNAM

NPIC/R-94/68
AUGUST 1968

Declass Review, NIMA/DoD

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POL MOVEMENT, NORTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese have become more open in their handling of POL products since the 31 March 1968 U.S. bombing restrictions were imposed, and it is now possible to see on aerial photography some of their previously concealed dispersal and disposition techniques.

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POL tankers arriving in Haiphong normally anchor in the Bach Dang Tanker Anchorage, where they are offloaded by POL barge. This activity has frequently been seen on photography, but the specific means of disposition of the POL after it had been offloaded onto the barges was not observed until [REDACTED] (Figure 1). Photography of this date, for the first time, reveals barges transferring POL by hose to tank trucks parked on a causeway across the Song Gia River. This type of activity was probably carried out at night prior to the bombing restrictions. Unless the POL is scheduled for continual movement from its offloading to its terminal destination, it is probably moved by tank trucks to underground dispersal areas, where it is stored until needed (Figure 2).

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The movement of POL from its offloading near Haiphong to other parts of the country may be accomplished in several ways. Petroleum can be loaded on rail cars [REDACTED] in Haiphong and moved to Hanoi (Figure 3). The POL can then be distributed from Hanoi by rail to the Nam Dinh and Thanh Hoa areas. Pol imported in drums or drummed in Haiphong could also leave the city via rail cars. Due to the U.S. bombing threat below the 19th parallel and the poor condition of the rail lines in the panhandle area, the rail tank cars can go only as far south as Thanh Hoa. No significant numbers of rail tank cars have been observed north of Hanoi.

The transportation of POL by road from Haiphong may be accomplished by conventional fuel tank trucks filled from POL barges, or by 55-gallon-type drums loaded on cargo trucks. In either case, the trucks can carry the petroleum to Hanoi, where it can then be shipped south or to other parts of North Vietnam. The trucks could also transport POL from Haiphong directly south to the Nam Dinh and Thanh Hoa areas, or through the southern panhandle.

Although movement by road and rail is certainly feasible, it is felt that the bulk of all the POL leaving the Haiphong area and scheduled for southward movement does so by waterborne logistics craft utilizing the inland waterways of the delta region of the Haiphong/Hanoi/Nam Dinh triangle. POL barges have been seen as far south as Nam Dinh. It is possible that coastal craft leaving Haiphong could transport POL to

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southern coastal cities (i.e., Vinh and Thanh Hoa) for further transshipment, or even into South Vietnamese territorial waters.

Photography of the Nam Dinh area taken in July shows coasters, being used as POL carriers, engaged in the transfer of POL (Figure 4). Hosing, as well as several underground storage tanks, can be seen on this photography. It is not possible, however, to tell if the POL is being transferred from the coasters to the trucks or vice versa. In either case, the POL is probably scheduled for further movement south.

It is felt that the POL which moves south from Thanh Hoa does so primarily by truck (Figure 5). Fuel tank trucks and cargo trucks carrying 55-gallon drums have been observed on various routes below Thanh Hoa and as far south as Laos. This does not rule out the possibility of water transport of POL to Vinh and other parts of the southern region. Coasters, of the type observed in the Nam Dinh transfer activity, have been seen as far south as Vinh, although they could not be positively identified as POL carriers.

A newly identified pipeline under construction (NPIC/R-93/68) has been observed west of Vinh extending in a MNW-SSE direction for 21.5 nm. The pipeline begins and terminates in buried POL storage areas. This is yet another innovation in the movement of POL to areas in southern North Vietnam, Laos, and South Vietnam.

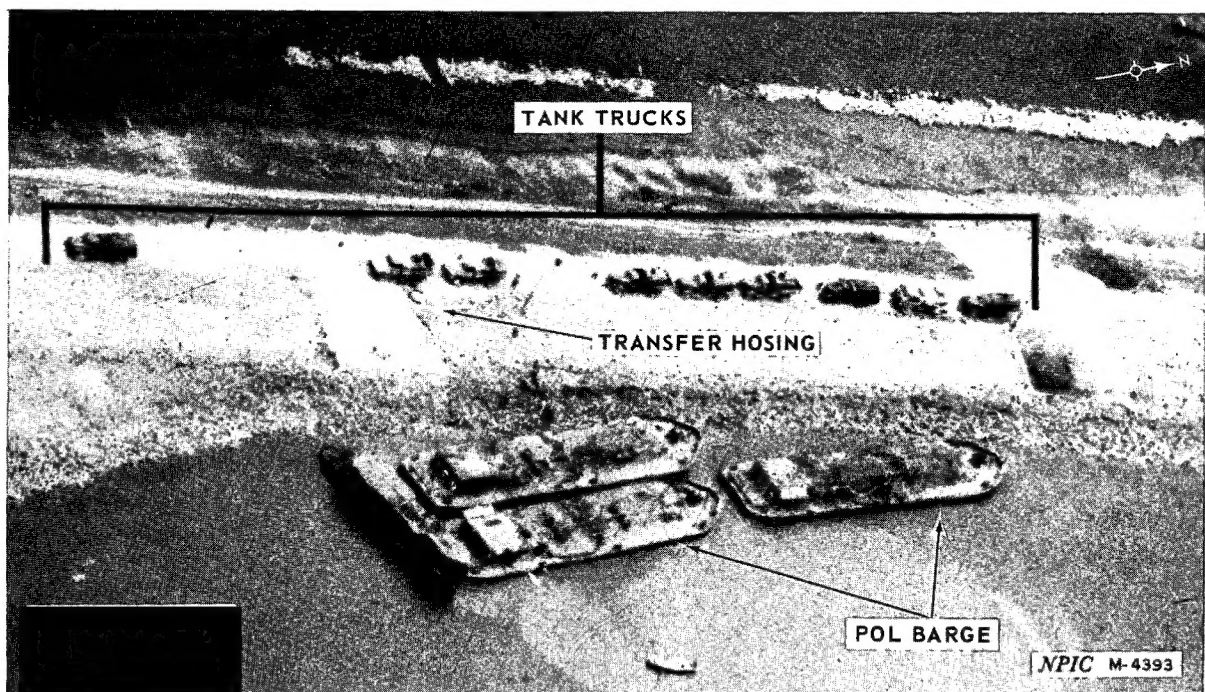


FIGURE 1. POL TRANSFER, HAIPHONG

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Page 2

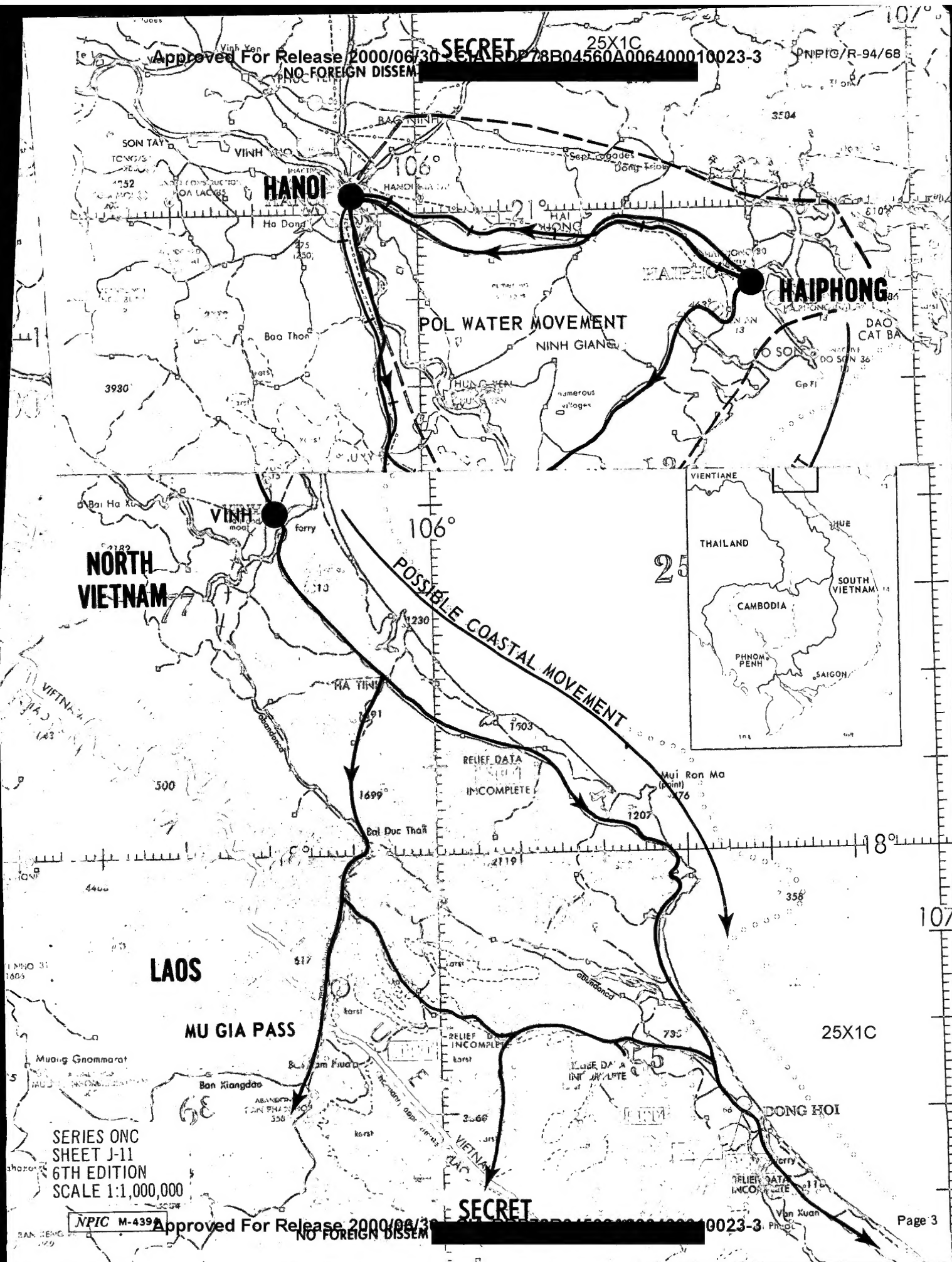
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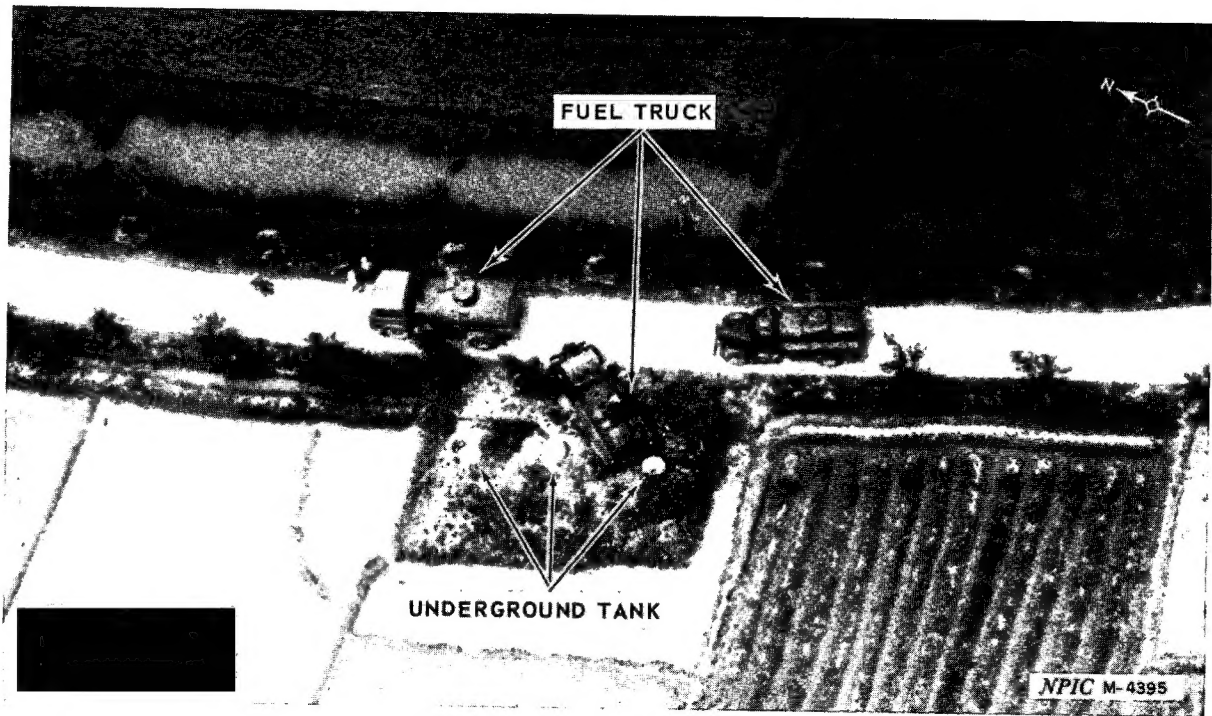
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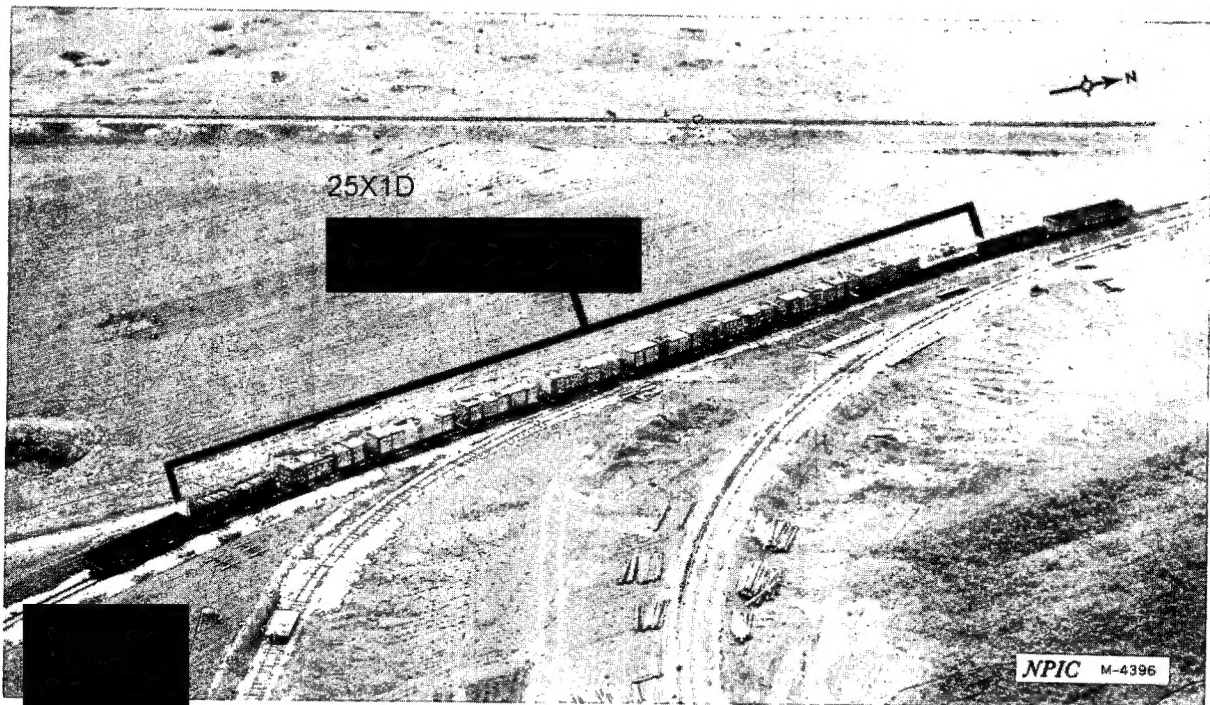
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FIGURE 2. FUEL TRUCKS AT DISPERSED STORAGE AREA



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FIGURE 3. RAIL TANK CARS, HANOI AREA

Page 4

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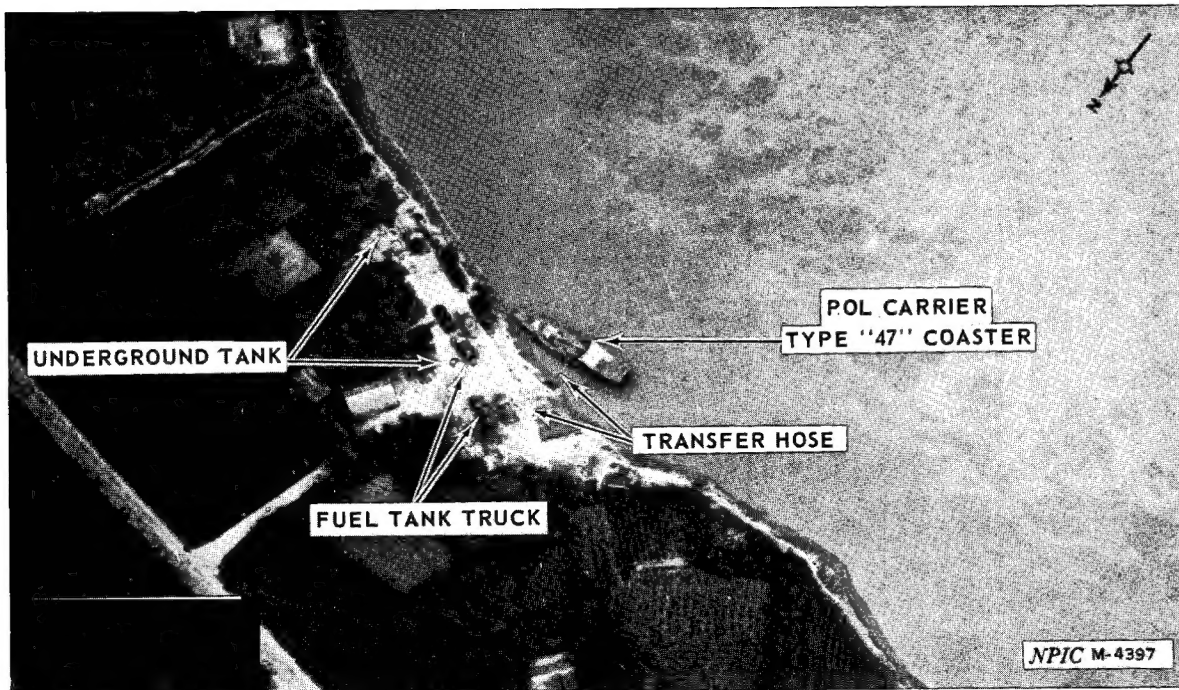


FIGURE 4. POL TRANSFER ACTIVITY, NAM DINH

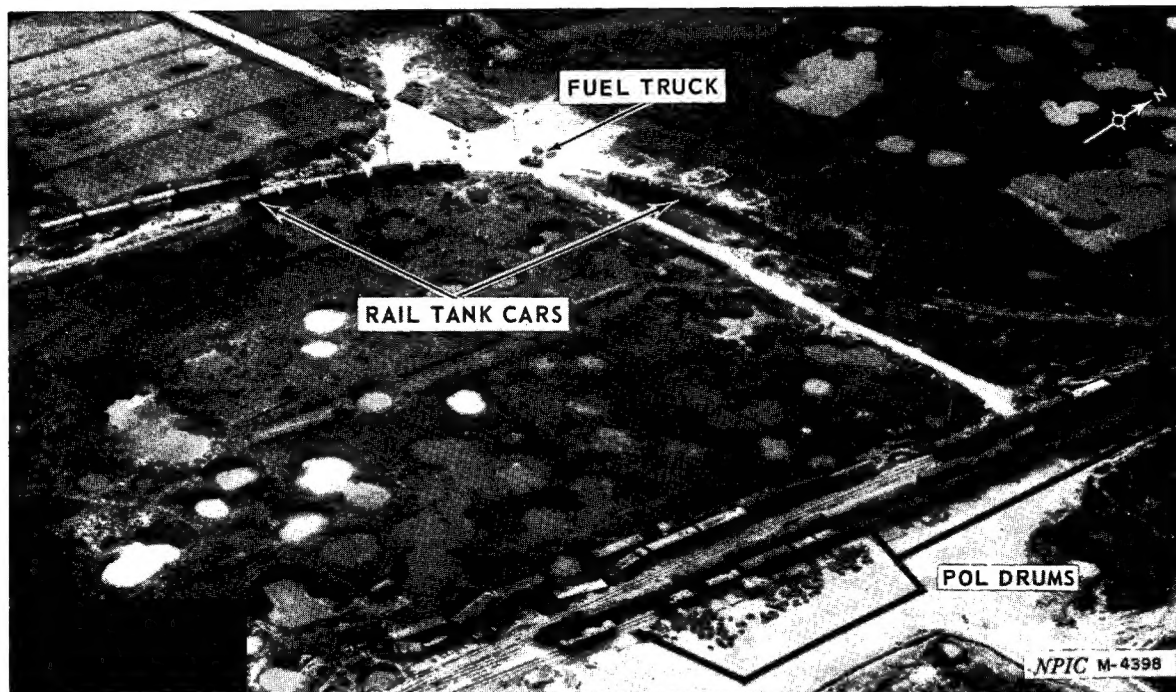


FIGURE 5. POL ACTIVITY, THANH HOA

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